

BENJAMIN CLUFF  
MARY ELLEN FOSTER CLUFF  
ELIZA ARNETTE FOSTER  
CLUFF

Benjamin Cluff Sr., the first Bishop of Center Ward, was born 20 March 1830 in Durham, Strafford Co., New Hampshire. He was the fourth child of David and Betsey or Elizabeth Hall Cluff. He was but a small child when his parents moved to Kirtland, Ohio, where the family became converts to Mormonism. Benjamin distinctly remembered the dedication of the Kirtland Temple and the persecution that followed. In 1840 the family moved to Nauvoo where



he as a young man took an active part in building up Nauvoo and worked with his father and brothers on the Nauvoo Temple which they could see from their home. They left Nauvoo with the exodus of the Saints in 1846. They stopped at Mt. Pisgah, Council Bluffs, and vicinity and in June 1850 the family started on the long, tedious journey to the Great Salt Lake Valley. They arrived on 13 Oct. 1850 with the Edward Hunter Party, settling in Provo after a few days. In the spring of 1853 he was ordained a Seventy by Joseph Young and in the fall was called with others to go south to Little Salt Lake Valley to strengthen the settlement and guard against the Indians. Benjamin married Mary Ellen Foster 28 Feb. 1854. He performed military duty in Echo Canyon at the time of the Johnston Army Invasion. He went to Cache Valley where he was called on a mission to the Sandwich Islands in 1864, where he remained for 6 years. He also married Eliza Arnette Foster, a younger sister of Mary Ellen, his first wife. They were married 1 May 1856. After living in Coalville for three years he desired to be closer to Provo with his family so his children could attend Brigham Young University. He desired a farm so he went to Center Creek where he purchased 160 acres of land from his father, across the road east from where the Center Ward Chapel now stands. His father had recently got a Government patent on it and was contemplating going to Arizona. Benjamin purchased the land with one yoke of oxen valued at \$100 and one double seated two horse spring wagon valued at \$170. This purchase made it possible for his father to move to Arizona. On 15 July 1877 when Wasatch Stake was organized, Benjamin was ordained a High Priest and a Bishop and set apart as the first Bishop of Center Ward, organized at that time. He held that position for six-

teen years or until 1894. During this time his son Benjamin Jr. went to the BYU where he joined the faculty and in 1891 became the second President of the BYU. Benjamin later went to Arizona then moved back to Provo where he enjoyed good health until his death on 19 Nov. 1909. He was the father of 15 children, seven by his first wife Mary Ellen and eight by his second wife Eliza Arnette.

Benjamin's wives Mary Ellen Foster and Eliza Arnette Foster were daughters of George and Mary Jane McCullough Foster. Mary Ellen was born 24 Dec. 1837 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Her father owned a foundry there, where he met with an accident and lost the sight of one eye. He bought a farm and while on this farm they heard the gospel and were soon baptized. The Foster family joined the Saints in their trek westward. They were persecuted and driven about with the Saints. She remembered hearing the Prophet Joseph Smith preach the Gospel near the Nauvoo Temple. The family left Nauvoo and settled at Winter Quarters then in 1847 they settled at Council Bluffs where they stayed to accumulate sufficient means to provide the necessary equipment for the journey across the plains to Utah. They arrived in Utah in 1852, settling first in Grantsville then in Provo. Mary Ellen married Benjamin Cluff in Salt Lake City on 28 Feb. 1854. She was a good wife and mother. She accompanied her husband to the Islands on his mission and helped him while there.

Eliza Arnette was a younger sister of Mary Ellen. She was born in Oct. 1842 in Hamilton County, Ohio, and was only four years old when the family joined the LDS Church. While crossing the plains their mother died of cholera leaving a baby daughter but four months old. It was at this time that Eliza as a small child proved to be a motherly type. She was endowed with a gentle, loving, patient and conscientious disposition which proved of value to her later in life. Benjamin Cluff took Eliza in marriage 1 May 1856. She bore eight children losing two of them in infancy. She proved to be a devoted wife and mother and took care of herself and family in Utah while her husband and Mary Ellen went to the Hawaiian Islands on a mission. She died in Center Ward in 5 Sept. 1880 and was buried in the Center Creek Cemetery.

Benjamin's and Mary Ellen's children are as follows:

1. Mary Jane, born 25 June 1855 in Provo, married to Alonzo Adelbert Brim, third Bishop of Center Ward.

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3. George, born 29 April 1860 in Provo, married Pamela Fortie 22 Aug. 1887 in the Logan Temple. George died in 1928 and his wife in 1946.

4. Mildred, born 20 April 1866 in Hawaii, married Richard Coope Harvey.

5. Ella M., born 2 Dec. 1869 in Hawaii and was married to George Berdnor.

6. David Foster, born 24 May 1873 in Logan, and was married to Cora Alexander 19 Aug. 1900 and later to Eunice Fern Cluff.

7. Walter Elmo, born 27 Nov. 1876 in Coalville, married to Mary Gertrude Miller 28 May 1902. He went East and founded and was the first President of the John Clough Genealogical Society. He died in Hartford, Conn., 26 April 1943.

Benjamin's and Eliza Arnette's children are as follows:

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4. Joseph L., born 7 Dec. 1864 in Logan.

5. William K., born 31 March 1871 in Logan.

6. Betsey or Bessie, born 25 May 1873 in Salt Lake City and was married to Hyrum W. Merrill 26 March 1891. She died in 1947.

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Murdock and Bob McKnight were main musicians with William Harvey and William Richardson calling the quadrills.

The Center Creek story would not be complete without mentioning "Pryde's Hall." For the time it was considered very good. (1891) It was built by one of the early settlers of Center. He was a Scotsman, Davie Pryde, and loved by one and all. The hall was used for dancing, theatres, weddings, school and church programs; in later years for basketball. There was a kitchen built along the east side and although it contained only an old kitchen stove, table and some shelves, very delicious dinners were prepared. Two of the main cooks were Mary Mair Lindsay, and Sarah Jane Thompson Lindsay. Many of the early couples were married or held their receptions in this hall. But the most important event was the 25th of January, when all the Scots from far and near gathered to celebrate the birth of their favorite poet, Bobby Burns. The Ritchie's from Charleston, O'Neils from Midway, the Lindsay's, Montgomery's, Fisher's, Turner's, Murdock's and many more gathered to sing and recite and dance. Barbara Dawson would dance the Highland Fling. Jim Lindsay, well versed in Burns, would recite. Andrew Lindsay would sing, "Annie My Scotch Blue Bell" and "Annie Laurie," with the group joining in the chorus. The evening would end with dinner and all singing "Auld Lang Syne."

Even with their busy farming schedules, and with dramatics, dancing, socials and sports events to fill their lives, the people in Center Creek have always found time to devote to their religious duties.

As they first settled the community, they built a chapel in which to worship. John Harvey came to the community to direct the activities of the ward in 1861. Then, in 1877 when the people moved back after the Indian wars, Benjamin Cluff was called to serve as Bishop of the ward. Serving as counselors to Bishop Cluff until his release in 1894 were Sidney Worsley, John Harvey, William Blake, John Baird and Archibald Richardson. Daniel K. Bunnell was clerk.

William Blake became bishop in 1894 and chose as his counselors Alonzo Brim and Richard Harvey. William Priestly was the clerk. They served together until 1898 when Alonzo Brim was called to be the new bishop. His counselors were David W. Smith and Thomas Clegg, with William Priestly continuing as clerk. Thomas Clegg was sustained as the fourth bishop in 1900, and chose as his counselors David W. Smith and William Ryan. Elder Ryan also acted as clerk.

In 1903 David W. Smith was called to be the ward's fifth bishop. His counselors were William Ryan and Hugh W. Harvey. Just one year later, in 1904, Elder Harvey was sustained as the ward's sixth bishop. His counselors at that time were Anton M. Hansen and Charles Jensen. Other counselors included D. Warren Smith, Elmer Mahoney and Bennett Lindsay. Soren C. Christensen served as ward clerk.

During Bishop Harvey's term, the need for a new meeting house was keenly felt. After considerable discussion, it was determined to pur-

dent in 1955 and served until 1958 when Norma L. Christensen was sustained. Beth W. Crook was sustained in August of 1960. Beth moved in 1961 and Shirley Sweat was sustained.

**YOUNG MEN'S MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSN.**—Organized in 1879, the YMMIA in Center Creek had as its first superintendent Benjamin Cluff. He served until 1880 when William Blanchard was sustained as superintendent. Others who have served as superintendent include James Howe, 1881; William Ryan, 1882; (no records were kept then until 1896) Hugh W. Harvey, 1896 and 1897; William Ryan, 1898 to 1899; Hugh W. Harvey, 1900 to 1904; Anthon M. Hansen, 1904; Soren C. Christensen, 1905 to 1906; Charles Jensen, 1907 to 1908; Ray Mahoney, 1909; Charles Madsen, 1910 to 1911; Louris Mahoney, 1912 to 1916; Ray Mahoney, 1917 to 1918; John J. Peterson, 1919; Louris Mahoney, 1920 to 1925; Elmer Sweat, 1926 to 1928; Otis Sweat, 1929 to 1930; Louris Mahoney, 1931 to 1934; Otis Sweat, 1935; Ewing Peterson, 1936; Delbert Sweat, 1937 to 1939; LeRoy Sweat, 1940; Kenneth Anderson, 1941 to 1950; Neil Mahoney, 1950 to 1958; Harvey Crook, 1958 to 1960 and Boyd Sweat since 1960.

**YOUNG WOMEN'S MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION:** Youth work among young women in Center Creek began on an organized basis in November of 1887 when Maria Louisa Sessions was called as the first president of the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association. Others who have served as presidents of the YLMIA or its successor, the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Assn., include the following: Mary C. Brim, 1888-1889; Mary J. Hughes, 1889 to 1891; Sarah A. Richardson, 1891-1898; Arbelia Harvey, 1898; Mary Jane Smith, 1898 to 1900; Agnes Fisher, 1900 to 1903; Maggie Hundley, 1903 to 1904; Mary Thomas, 1905 to 1906; Elizabeth Lindsay, 1907 to 1908; Nancy Mahoney, 1909 to 1911; Catherine Lloyd, 1912 to 1916; Annie H. Crook, 1917 to 1918; Amanda Edler, 1919; Della S. Peterson, 1920; Pearl Streets, 1921; Emeline Sweat, 1922; Emeline Sweat (Mahoney), 1923 to 1935; Odetta Cummings, 1935 to 1938; Emeline S. Mahoney, 1938 to 1939; Odetta Cummings, 1940 to 1943; Lila Christensen, 1943 to 1950; Katherine Muir, 1950 to 1955; Ruth Elliott, 1955 to 1957; Lorna Sweat, 1957 to 1959 and Ruth Mahoney, since 1959.

## SCHOOLS

Until consolidation of the Wasatch County schools, Center Creek maintained an adequate educational program for its children. The first Center Creek School convened in a one room log building heated only by a pot belly stove in the middle of the room. George Wootton was one of the early teachers, and usually had some 80 students in grades one through eight. Other early teachers included Elisha Jones, Mary Brim, Sarah Muir, Violet Ryan, Brigham Clegg, Elfreda Jaspersen, Carlie Clegg, Millie Har-